

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1907

CINCPAC FOR POKLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJ: LIN PIAO AND THE GANG OF FOUR

REF: A. HONG KONG 7167; B. PEKING 1681

1. SUMMARY. IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, THE PRC MEDIA HAVE ADDED CRITICISM OF LIN PIAO AS A KEY THEM IN THE ONGOING CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE GANG OF FOUR -- A THEME STRESSED BY TENG HSIAO-PING IN HIS SPEECH TO THE PLA CONFERENCE. EMPHASIS ON LIN PIAO APPEARS TO BE DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO REASSERTION OF CIVILIAN AUTHORITY OVER THE MILITARY BUT ALSO HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL MILITARY LEADERS INCLUDING LI TEH-SHENG AND EVEN CCP CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG. END SUMMARY.

2. PRC LEADERS AND THE MEDIA HAVE BEGUN TO REFOCUS THE GANG OF FOUR CAMPAIGN TO INCLUDE CRITICISM OF LIN LIAP, MAO'S HEIR APPARENT WHO WAS KILLED AFTER A 1971 COUP
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ATTEMPT. IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS:
--VICE CHAIRMAN TENG HSIAO-PING SAID IT WAS
"IMPERATIVE" TO LINK CRITICISM OF LIN PIAO WITH
THE GANG OF FOUR CAMPAIGN. IN HIS JUNE 2 SPEECH TO
THE ALL-ARMY POLITICAL WORK CONFERENCE, HE
CLAIMED LIN WAS "SCARCELY CRITICIZED" IN THE
PAST BECAUSE OF THE INTERFERENCE OF THE GANG

OF FOUR.

--OFFICIALS IN KIRIN PROVINCE HAVE PICKED UP ON THE LIN PIAO THEME (JUNE 20 PEOPLE'S DAILY) AND APPARENTLY CRITICISM OF LIN IS BEING STRESSED IN OTHER PROVINCES;

--A JUNE 22 PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL ("POLITICS MUST PERMEATE ALL WORK") LINKED CRITICISM OF LIN WITH THE GANG OF FOUR CAMPAIGN.

UNDOUBTEDLY, CRITICISM OF LIN WILL CONTINUE AND BE INTENSIFIED AMONG PLA AND CIVILIAN UNITS THROUGHOUT CHINA

3. CRITICISM OF THE FORMER PLA CHIEF OF STAFF HAS NOT BEEN A MAJOR THEME IN THE PRC MEDIA SINCE THE 1973-74 CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIN PIAO AND CONFUCIOUS. ITS REVIVAL HAS SEVERAL IMPLICATIONS. THE MOST OBVIOUS IS THE REASSERTION OF PARTY CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY, A PROCESS THAT HAS BEEN GOING ON INTERMITTANTLY SINCE THE PURGE OF THE GANG OF FOUR. THE RECENT ALL-ARMY POLITICAL WORK CONFERENCE SETS THE STAGE FOR THE FINAL WITHDRAWAL OF THE MILITARY FROM THE CIVILIAN POLITICAL PROCESS AND FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF THE POLITICAL COMMISSAR SYSTEM.

4. AS IN ANY CAMPAIGN, HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WILL FEEL THE HEAT. YEH'S ABSENCE FROM PEKING
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IN MAY (BY HIS OWN ADMISSION) AND RUMORS HERE IN PEKING SUGGEST THAT YEH MIGHT HAVE VISITING RECALCITRANT MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS. MANY MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS ARE LIKELY TO CONCLUDE THAT RE-EMPHASIS OF PARTY CONTROL WILL WEAKEN THEIR OWN POLITICAL INFLUENCE. SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS SEEM PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE AS POTENTIAL TARGETS. THE JUNE 20 PEOPLE'S DAILY REPLAY ON CRITICISM OF LIN PIAO IN KIRIN SUGGESTS THAT TENG HSIAO-PING AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE CONTINUING TO PUT PRESSURE ON MILITARY LEADERS IN THE NORTHEAST FORMERLY ASSOCIATED WITH LIN PIAO AND THE GANG OF FOUR, ESPECIALLY LI TEH-SHENG, COMMANDER OF THE SHENYANG MILITARY REGION. LI HAS COME UNDER POSTER ATTACK IN SHENYANG IN RECENT WEEKS.

5. IN ADDITION, CONTINUED CRITICISM OF THE EVILS OF LIN PIAO HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR HUA KUO-FENG'S FORMER ROLE AS A KEY INVESTIGATOR OF THE COUP ATTEMPT. BY REOPENING THE LIN PIAO ISSUE AND CALLING FOR RECTIFICATION OF LEADING LEADERSHIP IN UNITS IN THE MILITARY, TENG IS IMPLICITLY DISPARAGING HUA'S ROLE IN

INVESTIGATING THE AFFAIR. HUA-TENG MANEUVERING
HAS APPARENTLY INTENSIFIED IN RECENT WEEKS AND
TENG'S EMPHASIS ON THE LIN PIAO THEME COMBINED WITH HIS
FORCEFUL PURSUIT OF MODERNIZATION AT ALL
COSTS WILL PROBABLY SHARPEN DIFFERENCES IN THE
POLITBURO IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.
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